

The Land Line

Traditional Communication in a High-tech World

25th Anniversary Edition



This is the 25th anniversary of The Land Line newsletter. The look of the newsletter has changed significantly from the years of carbon paper, typewriters and glue sticks, but the goal remains the same – to provide timely information to lessees of school trust lands. The newsletter comes by regular mail and is also available on the web at www.land.state.nd.us for your convenience. In addition to The Land Line newsletter, the web contains much more information such as cost-share forms, policies, leasing information and access to information about unclaimed property.

Thank you to all of our lessees for supporting education through your rentals for these past 25 years. School trust lands are an important part of funding education for our children in North Dakota.

Switchgrass and Global Warming

(*Panicum virgatum*)

Switchgrass is a perennial warm season tall grass and grows in tight clumps formed from numerous creeping rhizomes. It's pretty easy to identify in the vegetative state due to a triangular-shaped patch of hair on the upper surface of the leaf blade near the leaf collar around the stem.

Switchgrass is a co-dominant of the North American tall-grass prairie which once stretched from eastern North Dakota to Oklahoma. The tall grass prairie of eastern North Dakota where switchgrass would be easier to find has for the most part been converted to cropland. Switchgrass can still be found in central and western North Dakota in lowland prairie swales that receive upslope moisture. Switchgrass begins growth in late spring, grows rapidly in early to mid-summer, flowering and setting seed in mid to late summer. Switchgrass can reach a height of 3 feet at maturity in North Dakota. Because the growing point of switchgrass is elevated early in its development it is somewhat intolerant of grazing and is classified as a decreaser. Switchgrass is also susceptible to damage from clipping. Careful grazing and forage management are needed to maintain a vigorous stand on rangeland, seeded pasture and hayland. In seeded stands, because it tends to be earlier and more competitive than other warm-season grasses, switchgrass is best managed alone, instead of in combination with other warm-season grasses.



Switchgrass

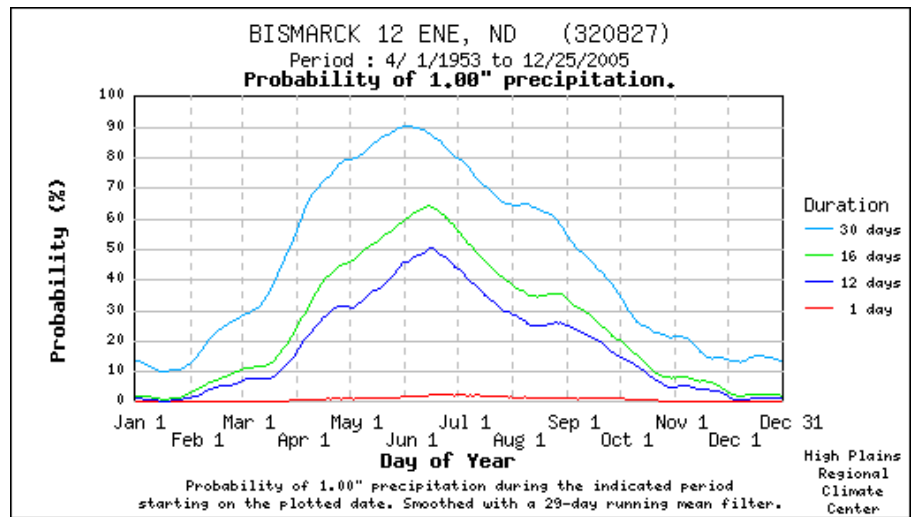
Cattle love it during the spring and early summer when leaves are green and succulent. By mid-summer when the plant begins to mature, palatability decreases rapidly. Switchgrass makes good hay when harvested prior to the boot stage and still green. Crude protein is high in late spring but drops to inadequate levels at maturity.

So, what about global warming and switchgrass? Switchgrass is a high forage producer yielding from 5 to 6 tons in the western Corn Belt and 1 to 4 tons in North Dakota. Because it is a high forage producing perennial crop, there has been much interest in using switchgrass as a biomass crop for conversion to ethanol. Switchgrass has more potential for conversion to ethanol than corn. Researchers have also found that switchgrass has the ability to store carbon deep underground due to its extensive deep root system when compared to nearby annual grain crops which can help to mitigate the effects of industrial greenhouse gas emissions.

Predict Rainfall?

Don't you wish that you could predict when it would rain and how much? A great new website allows you to view the probability of getting rain during any month of the year based on historical data.

This chart gives you a sample of what you can learn. It shows, based on rainfall records from 1953 to 2005, the probability of 1" of rainfall in the Bismarck area at any time during the year. For instance, if it's June 1st, you have a 90% chance of getting 1" within 30 days, a 60% chance within 16 days, and a 50% chance within 12 days. If it were April 1st or August 1st, you can see your chances would be significantly less.

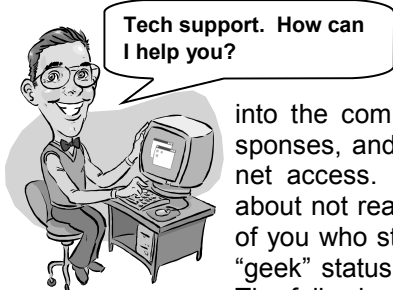


Hope springs eternal in the ranching business but historical records at this website tell if your optimism is justified. Here is how you can use this site:

- ◆ Enter <http://www.hprcc.unl.edu/products/historical.htm> into your web browser
- ◆ Select "North Dakota" from the drop-down box.
- ◆ Find a dot (weather station) on the map of North Dakota close to your location and click on it.
- ◆ On the left side of the next screen – quite a ways down - choose "Precipitation Probability by Quantity".
- ◆ The right side of the screen then allows you to the specifics – how much rain do you need and in how many days.

This site along with the article entitled "Can Abundant Summer Precipitation Counter Losses in in Herbage Production Caused by Spring Drought?" which can be found on our website (www.land.state.nd.us) gives valuable insight for managing your rangelands. This is a planning tool but some years are simply dry and then perhaps you would want to check the National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center at <http://www.cpc.noaa.gov> to see what is predicted for drought.

If you need help with these websites, feel free to call us at 328-2800. Knowledge is power and this certainly applies to farming and ranching.



Last fall our auctioneers asked a simple question at auction to find out how many of our lessees had moved into the computer age. We had nearly 500 responses, and 66% of you indicated you had internet access. Granted, a few of you fessed up about not really knowing how to use it. For those of you who still have a ways to go before reaching "geek" status, you're apparently in good company. The following "laughables" were real calls received by computer technicians in customer service call centers. (And if you aren't sure why these are funny – ask your kids or grandkids for help – they're sure to understand.) ☺

Customer: *I can't get on the Internet.*

Tech support: Are you sure you used the right password?

Customer: *Yes, I'm sure. I saw my colleague do it.*

Tech support: What was the password?

Customer: *Five stars.*

Customer: *I can't get my printer to work.*

Tech support: Are you running it under Windows?

Customer: *"No, my desk is next to the door, but that is a good point. The man sitting in the cubicle next to me is under a window, and his printer is working fine."*

Customer: *I have problems printing in red...*

Tech support: Do you have a color printer?

Customer: *Aaaah.....thank you.*

Managing for Drought

While we are eternally optimistic when it comes to the weather, the following articles provide some important information for optimizing grazing when we are challenged by the lack of rainfall or recovering from a drought. All of these articles are available for viewing through the Land Department website—www.land.state.nd.us.

- Coping With Drought - N.D.S.U.
- Can Abundant Summer Precipitation Counter Losses in Herbage Production Caused by Spring Drought?
- National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center
- Drought Stressed Rangeland - What to Expect for Forage
- Top 10 Drought Management Tips for Ranchers
- Drought and Stocking Rate Effects on Forage and Yields from Western SD Rangelands
- Managing Pastures During and After Drought

Spring 2007 Surface Lease Auctions

(Times and locations of auctions are subject to change. Check the legal notices in your official county papers, call 328-2800, or log on to www.land.state.nd.us to confirm dates, locations, and times prior to auction.)

Tracts that remain unleased after the completion of the Spring Auctions are available for rent throughout the summer on a first-come, first-serve basis for the established minimum bid. Send request to lease, along with payment, to P.O. Box 5523, Bismarck, ND 58506-5523.

Adams County

Wednesday, March 21, 2007
1:00 pm MT
Courthouse, Community Room
Dickinson, ND

Benson County

Tuesday, March 20, 2007
10:00 am CT
Courthouse, 3rd Floor Jury Room
Devils Lake, ND

Burleigh County

Thursday, March 22, 2007
1:00 pm CT
Courthouse, Commissioners Rm
Mandan, ND

Dunn County

Wednesday, March 21, 2007
1:00 pm MT
Courthouse, Commissioners Rm
Dickinson, ND

Eddy County

Monday, March 19, 2007
1:30 pm CT
Courthouse, Commissioners Rm
Carrington, ND

Golden Valley County

Wednesday, March 21, 2007
1:00 pm MT
Courthouse, Commissioners Rm
Dickinson, ND

Grant County

Thursday, March 22, 2007
1:00 pm CT
Courthouse, Commissioners Rm
Mandan, ND

Griggs County

Monday, March 19, 2007
1:30 pm CT
Courthouse, Commissioners Rm
Carrington, ND

Kidder County

Monday, March 19, 2007
10:00 am CT
Courthouse, Whitney Room
Jamestown, ND

McHenry County

Tuesday, March 20, 2007
1:00 pm CT
Courthouse, Ex-Serviceman's Rm
Minot, ND

McIntosh County

Monday, March 19, 2007
10:00 am CT
Courthouse, Whitney Room
Jamestown, ND

McKenzie County

Wednesday, March 21, 2007
11:00 am CT
Courthouse, Meeting Room
Watford City, ND

Mercer County

Thursday, March 22, 2007
1:00 pm CT
Courthouse, Commissioners Rm
Mandan, ND

Morton County

Thursday, March 22, 2007
1:00 pm CT
Courthouse, Commissioners Rm
Mandan, ND

Mountrail County

Tuesday, March 20, 2007
1:00 pm CT
Courthouse, Ex-Serviceman's Rm
Minot, ND

Nelson County

Tuesday, March 20, 2007
10:00 am CT
Courthouse, 3rd Floor Jury Room
Devils Lake, ND

Pierce County

Tuesday, March 20, 2007
10:00 am CT
Courthouse, 3rd Floor Jury Room
Devils Lake, ND

Ramsey County

Tuesday, March 20, 2007
10:00 am CT
Courthouse, 3rd Floor Jury Room
Devils Lake, ND

Renville County

Tuesday, March 20, 2007
1:00 pm CT
Courthouse, Ex-Serviceman's Rm
Minot, ND

Rolette County

Tuesday, March 20, 2007
10:00 am CT
Courthouse, 3rd Floor Jury Room
Devils Lake, ND

Sioux County

Thursday, March 22, 2007
1:00 pm CT
Courthouse, Commissioners Rm
Mandan, ND

Stutsman County

Monday, March 19, 2007
10:00 am CT
Courthouse, Whitney Room
Jamestown, ND

Towner County

Tuesday, March 20, 2007
10:00 am CT
Courthouse, 3rd Floor Jury Room
Devils Lake, ND

Ward County

Tuesday, March 20, 2007
1:00 pm CT
Courthouse, Ex-Serviceman's Rm
Minot, ND

Wells County

Monday, March 19, 2007
1:30 pm CT
Courthouse, Commissioners Rm
Carrington, ND

Williams County

Wednesday, March 21, 2007
11:00 am CT
Courthouse, Meeting Room
Watford City, ND

NOTE: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Land Department asks that anyone needing auxiliary aids and services should call 701-328-2806 at least five days in advance of the auction. Also, Title VII of Civil Rights Act of 1964 and ND Human Rights Act of 1983 prohibits sexual harassment in any form. It is expected that all participants at the auction will use good judgment in determining whether their behavior may be offensive or unwelcome to others.

Surface Management Employees to Fund Annual Range Camp Scholarship

Once again employees of the Land Department's Surface Management Division are providing funding for the child or grandchild of one of our lessees to attend Youth Range Camp. The scholarship includes tuition, room, and board at Range Camp which is held annually to educate North Dakota youth in the wise management of grasslands.

This year's camp will be held June 12-15, 2007, at Hanson's Logging Camp Ranch northwest of Amidon. Campers must be 13-18 years old, and are responsible for their own transportation to and from camp.

To apply send your name, address, and telephone number on a note saying that you are applying for the School Trust Land Scholarship to:

Kevin Sedivec
North Dakota State University
Box 5053, Hultz Hall
Fargo, ND 58105

The application deadline is not set but is generally mid-May. Check with your FHA advisor, extension agent, or Kevin Sedivec at 231-7647 (email ksedivec@ndsuxext.nodak.edu) for deadlines. The recipient will be selected randomly from those that apply.



1707 N 9th Street
PO Box 5523
Bismarck ND 58506-5523

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 419
Bismarck, ND
Zip Code 58504

■ Contacting Personnel at the State Land Department ■

The Land Department's diverse customer base includes just over 2000 ranchers and farmers across the state. Even so, members of the Land Department staff are readily available and generally can be contacted during normal business hours (701-328-2800). If the person you wish to speak to is not in the office, they may still be available by cell phone in the field, or you can leave a voice mail and they will get back to you later. (E-mail is an excellent contact mechanism as well). If you intend to stop by the office with a concern or question, it is best to call ahead to make sure the person you wish to speak to will be around, and not out in the field or otherwise out of the office. Below is a list of our surface management staff and their assigned duties.

Mike Brand (mbrand@nd.gov) - Director of Surface Management

Linda Fisher (llfisher@nd.gov) - Leasing

Mike Haupt (mhaupt@nd.gov)
Rights of Ways, Range Management, and Reclamation

Mike Humann (mhumann@nd.gov)
Range Management, Permanent Improvements

Jerry Saude (jsaude@nd.gov)
Noxious Weed Control, Public Access, and Leasing

Farm Real Estate Loans

Many of you may not know that the State Land Department offers real estate loans to farmers and ranchers through the Bank of North Dakota's Direct Farm Real Estate Loan Program.

While interest rates for short-term variable rate loans continue to climb, rates for the 10-year adjustable rate loans and 30-year fixed rate loans that are funded by the Land Department remain very competitive. In fact, the rates offered for 10-year adjustable rate loans are currently lower than rates for shorter term variable rate loans.

If you are looking for a new farm real estate loan, or are thinking about refinancing your current loan, you may want to contact the Bank of North Dakota at 701-328-5786, or check out their web site at http://www.banknd.nd.gov/Ls/Ls_rates_farmreal.jsp.

